National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

2009–2010

Reports on Plans and Priorities

The Honourable Jim Prentice
Minister of the Environment

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Message from the President and CEO

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE, or Round Table) is an independent policy advisory body reporting to Parliament through the Minister of the Environment. The purpose of the Round Table, according to the *NRTEE Act* (1993), is "to play the role of catalyst in identifying, explaining, and promoting, in all sectors of Canadian society and in all regions of Canada, principles and practices of sustainable development."

Drawing on the insight and experience of NRTEE members, the Round Table examines the environmental and economic implications of priority issues and offers independent advice on how to address them, with the ultimate goal of influencing federal policy development and decisions in other key sectors on these issues. Since its formation 20 years ago, the NRTEE has established a reputation for working effectively in highly contentious areas and for providing independent, credible, and balanced advice.

Two key overarching priorities are established for 2009–2010. The first is to produce and promote advice to decision makers on significant environment and economy issues—our core activity. The focus of this priority will be to provide policy advice on two specific areas: (i) the economics of climate change through a Canadian lens, and (ii) the relationship between water, natural resources, and climate change impacts in and across the energy, mining, forestry, and agriculture sectors.

Other priority activities will include establishing a continuous strategic outlook function to identify emerging sustainability issues, complying with the NRTEE's legislated responsibilities under the *Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act* with respect to the government's Climate Change Plan and Statement, responding to government-identified requests for advice on specific issues, and exploring the feasibility of strengthening cooperation with international sustainability research and public policy organizations.

The NRTEE will augment its communications approaches to promote its research, recommendations, and advice to decision makers. Activities will include media relations, targeted briefings with key players in the public and private non-governmental sectors, wide-spread report distribution, special events, and leveraging the resources of the Round Table members.

Our second overarching priority—applying sound management principles—will be critical to our ability to deliver on our first priority. We take seriously our responsibility to be accountable and to ensure that the stewardship of our financial and human resources is effective and aligned with government-wide initiatives. Specifically, in 2009–2010 we will be updating our risk profile and better integrating our business and resource planning processes.

Because it is important that the NRTEE demonstrate leadership in areas where it seeks to influence others, in 2009–2010 the Round Table will initiate implementation of an action plan designed to make its operations carbon neutral.

Over the years, the NRTEE has developed expertise that positions us well to provide a unique and substantial contribution to Canada's performance, particularly as it applies to the government-wide objective of building a globally competitive, sustainable, technologically innovative, sound economy. We are committed to assisting the Government of Canada address these challenges as quickly, effectively, and responsibly as possible.

David McLaughlin
President and CEO

Section 1: OVERVIEW

1.1 Raison d'être and Responsibilities

The purpose of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) is to play the role of catalyst in identifying, explaining, and promoting, in all sectors of Canadian society and in all regions of Canada, principles and practices of sustainable development. The NRTEE interprets this broad mandate through a strategic focus on issues of national interest at the intersection of the environment and the economy. Through its work, the NRTEE strives to influence policy development and decisions on issues pertaining to the environment and economy. These promote economic prosperity for all Canadians while striving to preserve the environment for current and future generations.

Purpose

(a) undertaking research and gathering information and analyses on critical issues of sustainable development;

(b) advising governments on ways of integrating environmental and economic considerations into their decision-making processes and on global issues of sustainable development;

(c) advising those sectors and regions on ways of incorporating principles and practices of sustainable development into their activities;

(d) promoting the understanding and increasing public awareness of the cultural, social, economic and policy changes required to attain sustainable development; and

(e) facilitating and assisting cooperative efforts in Canada to overcome barriers to the attainment of sustainable development.

NRTEE Act, Section 4

Created in 1988 by the Prime Minister, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) is an independent national advisory body reporting to the federal government and Parliament through the Minister of the Environment. The Round Table had its status formalized in 1993 by an Act of Parliament, Bill C-72, *An Act to establish the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE Act)*.

The NRTEE is a departmental corporation (*Financial Administration Act, Schedule II*).

The work of the NRTEE is directed by the Round Table members drawing on their expertise and insight. The members are part-time Governor-in-Council appointees. They represent different regions of Canada and are distinguished leaders from business, labour, universities, public service, Aboriginal communities, and environmental organizations.

A Secretariat in Ottawa, headed by a President and CEO, supports the members. The Round Table normally meets four times each year in plenary sessions where members discuss priorities and review and approve the work of the Secretariat.

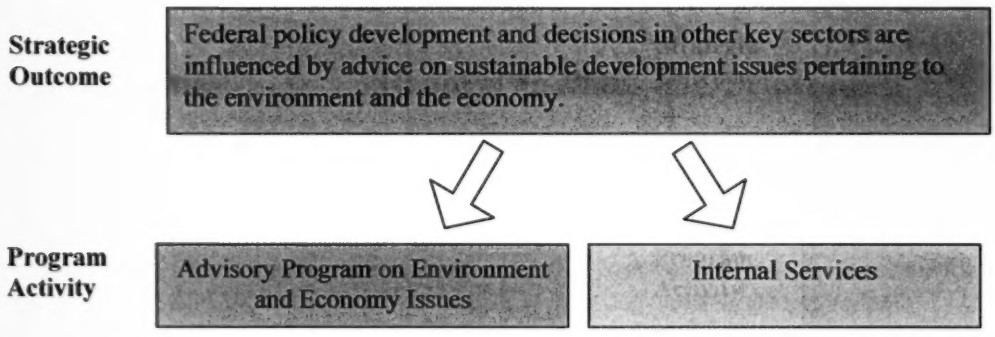
General information about the NRTEE and its membership can be found on the agency's website at www.nrtee-trnee.ca.

1.2 Strategic Outcome and Program Activity Architecture (PAA)

The NRTEE aims to achieve the following single strategic outcome: Federal policy development and decisions in other key sectors are influenced by advice on sustainable development issues pertaining to the environment and the economy.

This RPP is based on the Treasury Board-approved PAA shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Program Activity Architecture
National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy


Strategic Outcome
Federal policy development and decisions in other key sectors are influenced by advice on sustainable development issues pertaining to the environment and the economy.
Program Activity
Advisory Program on Environment and Economy Issues
Internal Services

1.3 Planning Summary

1.3.1 Financial Resources ($ thousands)

The financial resources table below provides a summary of the total planned spending for the NRTEE for the next three fiscal years.

Total Planned Spending

2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012
5,134.0	5,134.0	5,134.0

1.3.2 Human Resources (Full-time Equivalent [FTE])

The Human Resources tables provide a summary of the total planned human resources for the NRTEE for the next three years.

Total Planned Human Resources

2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012
31	31	31

1.3.3 Planning Summary Table

Strategic Outcome: Federal policy development and decisions in other key sectors are influenced by advice on sustainable development issues pertaining to the environment and the economy.					
Performance Indicator: Extent to which NRTEE advice is considered in policy decisions by federal decision makers		**Target:** NRTEE advice is partly responsible for a number of policy decisions and is often considered in assessing relevant policy choices made by federal government policy makers.			
Program Activity[1]	**Forecast Spending 2008–09 ($ thousands)**	**Planned Spending ($ thousands)**			**Alignment to Government of Canada Outcomes**
		2009–10	**2010–11**	**2011–12**	
Advisory Program on Environment and Economy Issues	5,300.0				Strong Economic Growth
Internal Services					
Total Planned Spending		5,134.0	5,134.0	5,134.0	

1.4 Alignment with Government of Canada Outcomes

In 2009–2010, the NRTEE will continue to contribute to the Government of Canada's outcome of *Strong Economic Growth* by providing relevant research and policy advice on how Canada can address sustainable development issues in the medium and long term. The NRTEE's advice, if implemented, is consistent with Canada's national interest and the government's objective of building a globally competitive, sustainable, technologically innovative economy that benefits all Canadians.

1. Treasury Board Secretariat approved program activity, please access the Main Estimates online at www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/est-pre/20082009/me-bd/pub/me-198_e.asp

1.5 Contribution of Priorities to Strategic Outcome

For 2009–2010, the agency has identified two key areas of priority, one operational and one management, both of which contribute to the NRTEE's single strategic outcome.

Priorities	Type	Links to Strategic Outcome	Description
Operational To produce and promote advice to decision makers on environment and economy issues	Ongoing	Federal policy development and decisions in other key sectors are influenced by advice on sustainable development issues pertaining to the environment and the economy.	Timely, actionable and relevant advice is essential to the NRTEE's credibility and its ability to influence decision makers; dissemination of the advice is another essential component of its work. Key plans for 2009–2010 include the following: • An examination of the economics of climate change through a Canadian lens. • Research, analysis, and advice on the sustainability of water supply, natural resources development, and climate change. (See Section 2 for additional information and other plans.)
Management To apply sound management practices in operations	Ongoing	Federal policy development and decisions in other key sectors are influenced by advice on sustainable development issues pertaining to the environment and the economy.	Sound management enables the NRTEE to focus on its primary program activity. Key management plans for 2009-2010 include: • Updating risk management profile • Improving the integration of operational and financial planning processes • Implementing a phased Carbon Neutral Action Plan

1.6 Risk Analysis

1.6.1 Organizational Context

The Secretariat, headed by a President and CEO, provides program management, policy and research analysis, communications, and administrative services to the NRTEE.

Issues to be examined by the NRTEE are identified through an internal screening and scoping process, in which the final decisions reflect current political, environmental, or economic priorities and NRTEE's members' combined interests. The NRTEE balances members' expertise and advice with stakeholder consultation and original policy research undertaken or directed by the Secretariat, as part of its approach to conducting its work.

The NRTEE also responds to specific requests from the federal government. In addition, the Round Table has a legislated responsibility to respond as per the *Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act* to the federal government's annual Climate Change Plan within 60 days. This annual reporting requirement exists until 2012.

1.6.2 Risks and Challenges

The NRTEE seeks to influence the government's approach to important sustainable development issues. To accomplish this, the NRTEE must produce and promote relevant, neutral, credible advice in a timely manner. Its ability to do so is affected by both risks and challenges. These are discussed below.

- A key indicator of the NRTEE's performance is its ability to influence government policy development. In Canada, particularly for the issues typically examined by the NRTEE, federal policy is not developed in isolation. It is affected by the government's relationships with other Canadian and international jurisdictions, and by a host of other factors over which the NRTEE has no control, creating a complex decision-making environment.

- The emergence of the economy as the primary issue of national interest poses a potential risk for the NRTEE as it may make it more difficult for the NRTEE to get the attention of decision makers whom the Round Table seeks to influence. Finding ways to promote the integrated relationship between the environment and the economy in its work and advice is one way to mitigate this risk.

- The members' expertise and insight is critical in directing the research and analysis of the Round Table's work. There is risk in having insufficient members and representation of interests, experience and regional diversity. According to the *NRTEE Act*, the Round Table is to comprise a maximum of 24 members and a Chair. In 2009–2010, eight NRTEE members' terms will expire; new members will need to be appointed quickly to ensure the Round Table's ongoing effectiveness. In addition, the timing of the members' appointments should strive to take the NRTEE's planning schedule into consideration to ensure continuity of programs and help integrate new members into existing plans. Ongoing liaison with the Minister's office on this issue, together with orientation for new members, can help address these challenges.

1.7 Expenditure Profile

The NRTEE's overall financial resources and expenditures indicate only minor fluctuations over time.

1.8 Voted and Statutory Items

Voted and Statutory Items displayed in the Main Estimates ($ thousands)			
Vote # or Statutory Item (S)	**Truncated Vote or Statutory Wording**	**2008–09**	**2009–10**
		Main Estimates	**Main Estimates**
	Operating expenditures	4,723.0	4,732.0
(S)	Contributions to employee benefit plans	411.0	402.0
(S)	Expenditures pursuant to Paragraph 29.1 (1) of the *Financial Administration Act*	20.0	-
Total		5,154.0	5,134.0

Section 2: ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME

2.1 Strategic Outcome

The NRTEE has a single strategic outcome:

> *Federal policy development and decisions in other key sectors are influenced by advice on sustainable development issues pertaining to the environment and the economy.*

The NRTEE's approach to achieving its strategic outcome is to produce and disseminate policy advice about sustainable development challenges and opportunities, to increase the understanding of decision makers of these, to inform the debate on current and emerging issues, and to endeavour to ensure that NRTEE advice is considered in policy decisions.

Target for 2009–2010: NRTEE advice is considered in assessing relevant policy choices made by federal government policy makers.

Performance indicator: A key indicator of the NRTEE's performance is the extent to which federal government policy makers consider the NRTEE's advice in federal policy decisions and its research results are used when developing policy recommendations.

2.2 Program Activities (PA)

The NRTEE has two program activities under the Main Estimates:

- *Advisory Program on Environment and Economy Issues*
- *Internal Services*

Each will be described below in Sections 2.3 and 2.4. All the expected results from the Program Activities directly support the NRTEE's two key priorities as well as the NRTEE's single strategic outcome.

2.3 Program Activity: Advisory Program on Environment and Economy Issues

PA Description

Raising awareness and understanding among Canadians and their governments about the challenges of sustainable development and promoting viable solutions are vital to Canada's environmental and economic future. Through this program, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) strives to influence policy development and decision making on select sustainable development issues pertaining to the environment and the economy. The NRTEE conducts research and analysis and produces information and advice on selected sustainable development issues. The agency promotes its findings and recommendations through a variety of communications channels such as media relations, stakeholder briefings and other events, publications, and the agency website to influence policy and decisions of policy makers in the federal government and other key sectors such as other levels of government, industry, and non-government organizations across the country.

Program Activity: Advisory Program on Environment and Economy Issues					
Human Resources (FTEs) and Planned Spending ($ thousands)					
2009–10		2010–11		2011–12	
FTEs	Planned Spending	FTEs	Planned Spending	FTEs	Planned Spending
17	2,933.0	17	2,933.0	17	2,933.0

Expected Results	Performance Indicators	Targets
Increased awareness and understanding	Level of awareness and understanding by federal decision makers of NRTEE advice on selected issues	Decision makers have high level of awareness of challenges and potential solutions proposed by the NRTEE. NRTEE is perceived as a leader, able to bring stakeholders together to discuss current and emerging issues.
Useful recommendations and advice	Usefulness of policy advice and recommendations	Informed and regular contact with government decision makers at all appropriate levels. Detailed policy briefings provided. Policy analysis is seen as relevant, timely, and useful. High stakeholder satisfaction.

Effective communication of recommendations	Quality and reach of external communications	High visibility with stakeholders. Communications reach wide range of target audiences. Broad range of communications products, perceived to be of high quality. Periodic media coverage, generally positive.
High quality research and consultations	Effectiveness of stakeholder consultation.	Frequent consultation with stakeholders at national and regional levels. Consultations confirm high-quality NRTEE research and build support for policy advice. High level of participation in NRTEE events. Events are perceived to have high added value.

Program Activity 1—Plans and Initiatives for 2009–2010 and Beyond:

2.3.1 Generate Policy Advice

The Round Table's research and analysis will focus on two key initiatives:

The Economics of Climate Change

This project will include three major components:

- An assessment of the economic impacts of climate change in Canada under various scenarios, including a scenario where no mitigation is put in place (the costs of inaction).

- An assessment of the long-term costs and benefits of various and more stringent mitigation and adaptation policies. The expected economic impacts will be determined for various regions and sectors of the Canadian economy.

- A discussion of the economic opportunities for Canada as part of a global transition to a low-carbon economy. This will involve analysis of the economic, innovation, and other policies that would prepare Canada to maximize opportunities in a low-carbon future.

This project is expected to run until at least 2011 and will be conducted through a phased approach with staged deliverables. The primary audience for this research will be governments, as they are responsible for policy design and implementation of climate-change mitigation and adaptation. A secondary audience will be the private sector, who will be affected by policy design and implementation, as well as environmental groups and academics.

Water and Canada's Natural Resource Sectors

The sustainability of Canada's agriculture, energy, forestry, and mining sectors is heavily dependent on the continued availability of water. Two key drivers are concurrently affecting Canada's water supply and distribution: rising consumption/use and climate change. What this means for sustainability is not clear, nor are the ecosystem impacts of these dual drivers well understood.

The NRTEE's work will explore these issues through a phased approach, and take a forward-looking, innovative perspective in the recommendations and products that are developed. A series of reports and related materials will be published. It will identify a suite of policy tools and approaches aimed at minimizing the negative impact—and optimizing the potential benefits—of changes in water availability and flow patterns in and across the energy, mining, forestry, and agriculture sectors. For more information go to: http://www.nrtee-trnee.com/eng/issues/programs/water/water.php .

2.3.2 Establish a Strategic Outlook Function

In 2009–2010, the NRTEE plans to inaugurate a strategic outlook function that will gather information, research, and intelligence to identify emerging sustainability priority areas where the issues are not yet fully known or appreciated, or where public policy discussion is not yet fully engaged. The NRTEE has a role to play in providing an independent, overarching view of these priorities. The information and analysis emerging from this function will assist the NRTEE to plan its policy work and resource allocation on a more rational multi-year basis. The results will also be made available to the NRTEE's primary stakeholders.

2.3.3 Comply with Bill C-288

The NRTEE will comply with its legislated responsibilities under the *Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act* with respect to the government's Climate Change Plan and Statement. In order to carry out its statutory obligations, the NRTEE will undertake research, gather information, and produce a written response as required within the mandatory time frame.

2.3.4 Respond to Government References

The NRTEE recognizes the importance of responding to government "references" or requests for advice on specific issues and will do so as required.

2.3.5 Establish an International Research Network

The NRTEE will explore the feasibility of establishing and strengthening cooperation with international sustainability research and public policy organizations. By working more formally with this network of international players, the NRTEE could facilitate access to new research, data, and best practices, and learn about the strategic priorities and foci of other, similarly mandated groups.

2.3.6 Promote Advice

The NRTEE uses a range of approaches to disseminate its recommendations and advice including media relations, targeted briefings with key audiences in the public and private non-governmental sectors, outreach activities, special events, and the NRTEE's website. Each audience is critical to building sufficient momentum for change and for promoting the NRTEE as a trustworthy source of credible research and advice.

Maintain Program and Corporate Communications Activities

In 2009–2010, the NRTEE will continue with briefings and stakeholder engagement on its ongoing work. These activities will be part of a targeted effort to increase the level of awareness and understanding of its recommendations and advice by federal decision makers and national stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of influencing policy development on the issues addressed. The meetings provide a forum to present the NRTEE's advice and also to hear from stakeholders. This exchange of ideas is important for ensuring that the advice is useful and relevant; it also assists in framing future possible work on specific issues.

The NRTEE website is a very cost-effective way to disseminate key information to stakeholders. In 2009–2010, the NRTEE will invest in future improvements to its website.

Improve Strategic Communications

One of the NRTEE's objectives for this planning period is to improve the quality and reach of its external communications. In so doing, it will increase the visibility of the NRTEE and its work among government decision makers and stakeholders. This will, in turn, increase the potential to achieve the NRTEE's strategic outcome, namely to influence policy. As the NRTEE has limited resources, tools and tactics will be tailored accordingly.

In recent years, the NRTEE has focused most directly on its relationship with the federal government and its role in delivering policy advice to that key audience. The NRTEE recognizes that it is not fully understood by certain stakeholder groups or the media, who are also critical to the NRTEE's ability to reach other important decision makers in Canadian society. In 2009–2010, the NRTEE will examine ways to enhance its communications efforts vis-à-vis key audiences, new communications objectives, positioning, and tactics.

Leveraging the resources of the Round Table members themselves will be an important element of this initiative. The NRTEE will therefore seek opportunities to use members for targeted communications activities.

Key Communications Messages for 2009–2010

The NRTEE is:

- a leading national public policy organization that best integrates analysis on issues and solutions affecting the environment and economy
- a *neutral space* to discuss issues affecting sustainable development
- a credible source of independent and balanced information to governments and the public on issues of the environment and the economy
- the catalyst for policy that integrates environmental and economic considerations

2.4 Program Activity: Internal Services

Financial Resources ($ thousands)				Human Resources (FTEs)		
2009–10	2010–11	2011–12		2009–10	2010–11	2011–12
2,201	2,201	2,201		14	14	14

Program Activity 2—Plans and Initiatives for 2009–2010 and Beyond:

2.4.1 Update NRTEE's Risk Management Profile

A review and update of the existing risk management framework will be undertaken to ensure the organization incorporates appropriate mitigation measures into its business planning and operations.

2.4.2 Improve the Integration between Operational and Financial Planning

Better linkages will be developed between business and financial planning to ensure that resources are properly aligned with priorities and utilized to maximum affect.

2.4.3 Implement a Phased Carbon Neutral Action Plan

The NRTEE is committed to becoming carbon neutral. In addition to minimizing its impact on the environment the NRTEE will also demonstrate leadership where it seeks to influence others. Based on a calculation of the NRTEE's baseline greenhouse gas inventory, in 2009–2010 the NRTEE will start to implement a phased *Carbon Neutral Action Plan* to reduce its carbon footprint with the goal of becoming carbon neutral.

2.5 Performance Measurement in 2009–2010

The NRTEE's Performance Measurement Framework and the Management Resources and Results Structure have been used as the basis for identifying the expected results and indicators for 2009–2010.

Key data sources for populating the framework are as follows:

- Feedback from federal decision makers and national stakeholders (based on biannual surveys)
- Feedback provided by participants after NRTEE consultation sessions
- Operational data related to communications and overall management of the NRTEE.

The NRTEE plans to monitor the usefulness and relevance of the various elements of the framework and to make adjustments as required to ensure their ongoing value.

2.6 Benefits for Canadians

The NRTEE benefits Canadians by addressing an issue of critical importance, namely sustainable development. The agency provides recommendations to decision makers with the ultimate goal of influencing policy on issues at the nexus of the environment and the economy. These recommendations, if implemented, are consistent with Canada's national interest and the government's objective of building a globally competitive, sustainable, technologically innovative economy.

Section 3: Supplementary Information

3.1 Summary of Capital Spending by Program Activity

http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca/eng/publications/annual-reports/RPP-2009-2010/RPP-2009-2010-Table-3-1.php

3.2 Other Items of Interest

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(At April 1, 2008)

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